

BALLET TODAY 1 1/2

OCTOBER

1953

ANTONYN IN
MAIN—BY BARON

Anton Dolin
— Profile

OLAND PETIT
SEASON IN FULL

Edinburgh,
Verona & Berlin

PROVINCIAL
DANCE TRADITION

Modern dance
— Argument

Ballet Digest
— the ballet
month in news
and pictures



Yvette Chauvire

PHYLLIS BEDELLS

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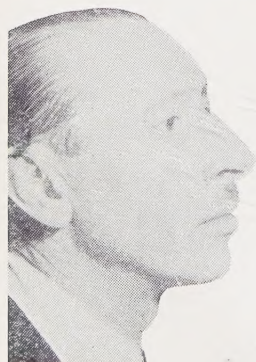
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ballet to-day

Edited by PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

Preview...

ON another page is introduced a new feature, FUTURES, which each month will group several professional ballet writers together and record by tape-machine their discussion on ballet trends and directions.

For the first of these arguments the subject is cinedance, the two guest critics are Edith Barking who is becoming known to BALLET TO-DAY readers and A. V. Coton, the EVENING STANDARD and N.Y. DANCE NEWS critic.

By 'professional ballet writers'—a phrase I have been asked to explain several times—I mean active journalists who have expert and specialized knowledge of dance and who devote a major part of their time to dancing. And who depend for their basic needs on the success of their writing. That is they have no safety jobs, parental cheques or kind 'friends'.

The lack of such professionals has been one of the major obstacles to ballet upswing in this country. Too many are 'friends in ballet' first and writers second. This leads to the perfumed nonsense and prating bias of current dance literature.

SO DIFFERENT?

The puzzle is that the other arts—music, drama, cinema—are treated seriously and authentically in the national press. Why not ballet? Has the repute of ballet been so accepted as being 'different' to all else that professional standards and sane,

© Decor sketch for the "Streetcar Named Desire" ballet by courtesy of DANCING STAR

"FUTURES ON TAPE"

critical writing need not apply to it?

If this is so, there can be no surprise at the gradual ignoring of ballet altogether by the national newspapers. The editorial thinking runs: if this ballet is unimportant enough to be treated this badly, it cannot be important enough for me to give it space at all.

First movers: DAILY MIRROR, DAILY SKETCH. No ballet. Next—DAILY EXPRESS for which paper the dramatic critic, able John Barber gives what ballet coverage is required. Another daily is to drop its ballet critic 'economically' this month. In others the tickets are given to odd-jobbers. This disgusts many people in ballet... but is ignorance much worse than inanity?

Look at the huge Sundays: EX-



PRESS, PICTORIAL, NEWS OF THE WORLD, GRAPHIC, PEOPLE... no ballet critic.

What is the future of ballet journalism? As we argue in the FUTURES feature on cinedance—there has been none so far. So the future is at least clear of precedent!

EQUITY "NOTES"

Of several letters which followed BALLET TODAY's story on dancer wages, the most interesting is one on the deposit system.

This Equity idea requires managements to deposit a certain sum of money to underwrite wages for the company's dancers. I am told that this system is not working as it might. I had imagined (in one case I know this did in fact happen) that the required money was lodged in cash with Equity officials. But no.

Apparently an undated cheque can be given Equity as 'guarantee' or the required sum can merely be entered in the company's bookkeeping.

If this is true it makes nonsense of the whole scheme. Of trustworthy managements no such deposit is necessary—such men as Jack Hylton, for instance, would never see a dancer go wageless. He proved that well once. But of the other kind of managements, an undated cheque or a penstroke in the books is as valueless as their word of honour.

These deposits against wages must be paid in cash and I recommend Equity to examine the working of their basically excellent safeguard to ensure it is just that: safe.

ON THE COVER: Yvette Chauviré

THE dancing of Yvette Chauviré recalls to mind the memory of some exquisite piece of craftsmanship, most lovingly and delicately contrived. It might perhaps be a work by one of the great Renaissance silversmiths, who, fascinated by the By R. J. tiny detail and fragile AUSTIN elegance of what he had designed, fell in love with the beauty of his own creation so that he could hardly bear to part with it.

For Chauviré the ballerina is also

her own creation, one as lovely as was theirs. Her art represents the action of a fine intelligence and sense of style on a body disciplined by intense application to express every nuance of feeling at the command of the classical dancer. Not for her the splendour and high passion of a ballerina borne along in an ecstasy of movement; with Chauviré every step and gesture is presented only, it appears, after the most careful consideration as to its total effect in balance and harmony upon the rest of the dance.

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WHAT do you say to a company such as the Royal Danish Ballet? Which measure do you apply? This is like springing a Pepino Leoni dinner on a pale wraith upbrought on Beverly Baxter's roast beef and mashed. Throw away the measuring stick and notch out a new one.

First then, Bournonville's SYLFIDEN adapted for Lucile Grahn from Filippo Taglioni's LA SYLPHIDE for his daughter.

Preparations are being made for the wedding of James and Effie at a Scottish farmhouse. But James is infatuated with a Sylphide who loves him. He forsakes his bride-to-be for her, follows her into the forest. A witch gives him a magic scarf to bind Sylphide to him but, in fact, this scarf causes her wings to fall off and she dies, borne away on the air by her sisters.

The second act is a continuous revelation of theatre dance. The overhang of the decor, the lighting, the production details are perfect. The Witch of Gerda Karstens is pure theatre and yet, fantastically, a believable person, not a clichéd caricature.

Erik Bruhn's James is expert, again acted into believability.

But this Margrethe Schanne. I have seen nothing like the quality of her dancing. A flashback to the romantics, perhaps more of Taglioni or Grahn than I can believe even they themselves could have had in their time. Her Sylphide is a thing of beauty, of perfection. Not a flaw, not a fickle second to bring even the down-bogged critic back to his surroundings.

Schanne is everything I mean, and we all mean, when perfection is being sought for description.

This lovely woman is the proof that the ideal of ballet can be flesh and blood.

And I suggest that every reader who has called me harsh on *corps* work should embark for Denmark and see a full *corps* move as if in brushstrokes from a painter god.

POLAR PRINTEMPS

Harold Lander's marathon choreography for Niels Bjorn Larsen in QARRTSILUNI is animal, percussive, attention - riveting theatre.

Described as a choreographic fantasy on the rites of the Angekok, the ballet concerns a mass of villagers anxiously awaiting the sunbreak through the long dark of everlasting winter.

An Esquimo SACRE DU PRINTEMPS, the work would melt an igloo with the fire of its fervent, boulder-like movement of crowds

• Margrethe Schanne in "Sylfiden"



The Schanne, The Sylfiden, The Success

contrapuncting the stage as a background to Larsen—to the percussive and crescendo-full Riisager music.

The green of the second drop was not too happy but the craggy wings and bare forms of the main decor were a creditable introduction to scenist Svend Johansen.

Larsen sustained his work throughout with a body slow and mobile. The attention unwavered, the interest sharpened by the powerful mass of stage movement. An achievement.

THE WHIMS OF CUPID AND THE BALLET MASTER had some fine touches but—understandable perhaps by its age, it was produced by Galeotti in 1786—little to commend it to a contemporary audience.

A joke in which a lovely girlchild Cupid marries off a strange assortment of types illustrates again the company's sure grip on stage movement. But the joke itself—what is funny about a young girl getting a young Negro boy?—was thin.

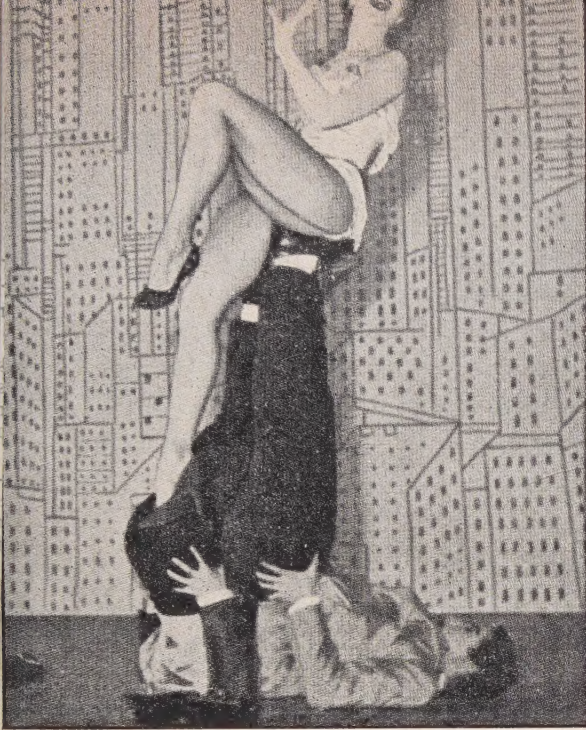
DIGEST ROMEO

ROMEO OG JULIE was a fragmentary digest of the Shakespeare theme to Tchaikowski. Julie (Mona Vangsaa) was good to type but had little to dance in Birger Bartholin's choreography. The two principal men — Romeo (Frank Schaufuss) and Tybalt (Stanley Williams) and the male sextet fared better. But it remained an unsatisfying work.

CASSE NOISETTE grand pas de deux (grandly called NODDEKNAEKKEREN) showed the results of contemporary Danish training. An eighteen-year-old Kirsten Simone danced the fairy without bravura but with a firm, whole approach that almost dimmed the too-sweet music. Eric Bruhn was an accomplished dancer but no cavalier, his partnering was the only blemish this pas showed.

And, the awaited of the season, COPPELIA. Inge Sand was rather soubrettish at first but developed into an excellent Svanhilda. The Frantz of Bjornsson was strong and

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Colette Marchand in Cine-Bijou



Violette Verdy and Petit in Le Loup

PERISHABLE—BUT PLEASING—PETIT

... and the most beautiful love story ever danced

AS transient as its tempos, as dateable as its colloquialisms Roland Petit's Ballet de Paris opened their Stoll Season on August 24.

Nothing in the repertoire will outlast Petit, nothing could. Here are no classics for successive generations to water down. No strength-trial roles to forever pass verdict on their executors.

Boiled down to blunt, the first night gave us two vaudeville turns and in between—here the anomaly of Petit—the most beautiful, tender love tale ever danced.

First the turns. CINE-BIJOU by Jean-Pierre Gredy to Pierre-Petit music is a skit in Petit's best manner. A suburban just-met couple go under the neons to identify themselves with the principals of a film they watch. She, raincoated typist, becomes the lingerie-and-lace star, he—young man—becomes the spivocoated Gangster. Duplex appartement, golden bed, skyscrapers as doormat. But the films ends, the house turns out, the man and the typist go opposites into the night. The neon sign blinks dead.

Sad in the telling, this ballet becomes a songalong—lyrics by Petit—for Star Marchand ("I've Nothing On Under My Overcoat"), Gangster Petit and Policeman Serge Perrault. The ballet? Little or no dancing. As spectacle, an Andre Beare-paire feast. As theatre, fun. As Roland Petit, like so much perishable but pleasing.

REAL MERRY

Petit's **DEUIL EN 24 HEURES** (The Beautiful Widow) is a right on time example to Ruth Page on how to merry a widow. With **Clave** decor, stage upon stage of it, this story of the oft-widowed **Colette Marchand** and her new seducer, **Serge Perrault**, carries along with a pace frightening to the English choreographer who slows his way in case ideas run out.

Ursula Kubler and **Joe Milan** rather steal the dancing limelight with Marchand again romping her role without giving more than a hint of whether she can dance at all.

ANOUILH WOLF

Jean Anouilh and **Georges Neveux** tell the story of a new bridegroom who runs away with a gipsy girl, leaving the bride with the idea that he has changed into a wolf. The bride looks for her husband and finding a wolf thinks it is he. Gradually she discovers the wolf is just that—a wolf. Terrified at first, she becomes attracted to the wolf, who, unlike men, is incapable of weakness or lying. The villagers hunt the wolf and, true in her love, the girl defends him; dies at his side.

LE LOUP is a Petit ballet to prove him against the variety turns he often mounts. Tender, gripping, pathetic and intensely moving the most beautiful love story ever danced. The lovely girl who gives up her world to link fate in fate with the wolf—the outsider—and to prove her woman's

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Ballet in Review
by **PETER**
CRAIG-RAYMOND

Ballet Digest

HELPMANN IN

—And one based on Degas . . .

● HELPMANN 3D

Robert Helpmann plans to direct Shakespeare's **THE TEMPEST** as a 3D Technicolor film next year. His collaborator will be Michael Benthall who directed the 1951 Stratford production of the play.

I noticed Helpmann with Spencer Tracy at the **CINDERELLA** first night. Remembering that Helpmann partnered Katherine Hepburn in **THE MILLIONAIRE**, and the Tracy/Hepburn **PAT & MIKE** partnership proved a very successful one . . . could it be a basis for rumouring some tripartite idea?

● DEGAS FILM

Under the title **MONTMARTE**, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer are to make an Edgar Degas biofilm. Casey Robinson wrote the story with Degas' ballet work uppermost in mind.

This is borne out by the first casting announcement: Leslie Caron, Cyd Charisse.

● NEAR £7,000 WEEK

Ballet Theatre grossed over £26,000 for their four week Covent

Garden season. This represents an excellent near £7,000 week. In competition were **Festival Ballet** at Festival Hall for which no figures are available.

Ballet Theatre start their American tour on December 28 at **Philadelphia** and will play solidly through until June, 1954.

● WINNIPEG BALLET HERE

The **Royal Winnipeg Ballet**, Canada's first professional company, will tour the U.S. next March and April and leave for a European tour soon after. The company expects to be playing for 52 weeks next year in contrast to the 44 weeks booked this year.

A London season is rumoured but unconfirmable as we go to press.

● HUOK SIGNS

An unnamed group of Japanese dancers has been signed for an American tour by **Sol Hurok**. While in Britain Hurok also signed a two year agreement with **Nora Kovats** and **Istvan Rab** and a tour contract for **Roland Petit's Ballet de Paris**.

● DANCE THEATRE

A contemporary dance theatre centre is planned by **Hettie Loman** and **Sally Archbutt** at Toynbee Hall next year.

The **British Dance Theatre** company is reforming and are to appear on the eighth of this month. From January a one-programme-a-month schedule is promised.

● NOW FIREBIRD

The Swedish film **FIREBIRD** which includes three ballet sequences, one a version of the **Strawinski** ballet, is being readied for American release by **Sol Lesser**. I previewed this film last year in **OPERA** and **SIGHT & SOUND** when it had a September, 1952, release date. Since then—to quote its British distributors—it has been "lost." Now? We may yet see it.

● LAST NIGHT?

The theme from **Debussy's L'APRES MIDI-D'UN FAUN** has been used for a popular song, "Afternoon Dream." Various uses have been made of ballet music for popular songs including "Full Moon and Empty Arms" from the **Rachmaninov** used in **WINTER NIGHT**.

● MARCHAND FILM

Colette Marchand has been signed for the film **BELL DOESN'T RING**.

● BEST SEASON

The New London, Connecticut American Dance Festival had its best season for six years from August 20-23. Attendance was over 1,000 for each of the five performances. Ten premieres were given and dancers included **Jose Limon**, **John Butler** and **Sophie Maslow** dance companies.

● AND ANOTHER

By the month before the New York opening, **Sadler's Wells** had an assured complete sell-out and a gross box-office of **DOUBLE** the next highest in town: **WONDERFUL TOWN**. Over £35,000 a week was taken during the New York month on advance booking alone.

The full tour will gross at least three quarters of a million pounds.

● GILMOUR DEBUT

Sally Gilmour (writes **John O'Brien**) made a startling debut as an actress, playing the lead role in **Strindberg's MISS JULIE** for the Melbourne Tana Company.

She gave an extremely fine performance, in which movement did not predominate, and she immersed her personality completely in the part—conveying the neurotic force and the indecision this role demands.

So far she has announced no dancing plans here.

● OTHER AUSTRALIAN NEWS

Laurel Martyn's Ballet Guild staged a full-length **CASSE NOISETTE** at the beginning of September in Melbourne.

Kira Bouslov's W. Australian Ballet opened in Perth with a version of **GRADUATION BALL**.

Both the **Borovansky** and **National Ballet** are recessed, but will again be operating late this year.

● NEW SCHOOL

Pilar Llorens, who will be extensively covering Spanish dance activity for **BALLET TODAY**, tells me that Madrid is to have its first official ballet school this year. The director of Barcelona's school is superintending the new arrival.

● INGLESBY DECOR

New decor has been designed for the International production of **SLEEPING PRINCESS** by **Denis**



● **NIVES POLI** in National Italian costume for **FORZA DEL DESTINO** (see story under "Verona" on page 8). On the right—**FEDORA BARBIERI** and, centre, scenist **FRANCO LOLLII**.

3D SHAKESPEARE FILM

Winnipeg Ballet to come . . . Petit to tour United States

Wreford. The company's English tour is now under way (see diary).

● BALLET LULU?

Alan Berg's LULU opera may become a ballet if one current rumour becomes a fact. LULU, which has a Carmen-like heroine in some ways, might well make a ballet. But would Berg's score?

● NO SOVIETS

Even Paris has given up the possibility of any Soviet ballet appearing this year. The possibility of even a few principal dancers arriving is seen as remote although Spring-announced plans led us to believe (cautiously) in a full company.

● YOUNG PAVLOWA

I have just seen Pavlowa as young and radiant as none of her photographs show her: in an old London postcard reproduction. This will be published in the November issue.

● AROVA TO AUSTRALIA

All the news seems to be in rumours this month and Arova is no exception. I have it on what THE TIMES might still call 'highest authority' that Arova recently mentioned plans to dance in Australia. Sonia, apparently, put this in the rather quaint way: "I may be in a country our Queen visits."

● BALLET MINERVA

Edward Gailard's Minerva Ballet opened at the beginning of September in Devon after a shoe-string opening 'try-out' at Wembley. This group will tour very small towns and villages in West and South England and in Wales.

A Rambert student, Gailard has in his company of ten Kathleen Gray and Janet Petters. Alan Carter—whose St. James's Ballet tried a similar experiment—has choreographed two ballets, THE WRAP and RONDO for the company.

● IS BALLET?

Where do you find ballet? This month's most unlikely place—a short review—in a newspaper called WEEKLY SPORTING REVIEW! So that's what ballet is now.

● LITHE FORM

A number of poems have been written on ballet and to dancers. Perhaps the finest was Pushkin's

(in EUGENE ONIGEN) to Avdotia Istomina. Gautier's SPECTRE was another. BALLET TODAY is to publish a number of these, including contemporary short works, and suggestions from readers or actual originals from published poets are welcome.

● NOW ELAINE

Dramatically leaving Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet just before a Manchester performance of BLOOD WEDDING . . . Elaine

Fifield made a decision.

The problem was: baby or ballet. Doctors warned her that to keep on dancing meant possible hurt to her spring-expected baby. With her husband, musical director John Lanchberry, Elaine decided on forgetting her career. Marion Lane replaced her. As with Beryl Grey this was a bad professional move. But Elaine has chosen sincerely and—so far as I am concerned—more than well. A good decision—congratulations.

BALLET TODAY HAS TWO REPRESENTATIVES AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL. ON PAGE 10 GEORGE HUBERT REVIEWS . . . HERE SUSAN LESTER REPORTS ON

LUCIA CHASE SPEAKS IN EDINBURGH

★ Lucia Chase was accompanied by Alicia Alonso, Miss Ruth Ann Koesun, John Kriza, Igor Youskevitch, Eric Braum and the musical director, Joseph Levine. Miss Chase said that her company hoped to produce some new works next summer. They were basically a classical company and they adhered to Fokin and the older works as closely as possible, including GISELLE. They were the only company today outside Russia, to produce LA FILLE MAL GARDEE, which had passed through such wonderful artists as Michael Mordkin, Nijinska and their own Dimitri Romanoff.

★ In answer to a question, she felt that the "ballet blanc" was by no means finished from a point of future productions, but there is a dearth of choreographers today and they are all passing through phases which influences the repertory, i.e. Tudor and Robbins are going through the 'psychological' stage, but both could produce classical ballet if required. Agnes de Mille wants to do a classical ballet, but no one believes she can. Very soon a Ballet Theatre Workshop will be set up at the School in New York, where new ideas will be tried out.

★ Someone referred to the now infamous remarks made by Tyrone Guthrie on ballet about a year ago and Miss Chase could only say that ballet is growing daily in U.S.A. They have not even scratched the surface of the ballet public there yet. She found that every tour by any company helped, also T.V. and musical comedy.

★ She felt that to include speaking and singing in ballet was always in the nature of a touch and go experiment. No one had refined it to clear cut style yet. She said that next year Agnes de Mille wanted to include works with singing in her own company.

★ The company are going to make a film in London, but as details are not yet signed, she could not give details. In view of the difficulty and expense involved in bringing together new artists for new works, they would definitely be filming old ballets. The film would probably consist of three ballets and a pas de deux from the old repertory. The film would not be 3D. They have never done a full film before, except one in Mexico which starred Baronova.

★ Mr. Levine said that at the Metropolitan he nearly had a Ballet Theatre Orchestra, 80% staying with them each time they played there. Of these a nucleus of twenty musicians travel with them through U.S.A. In Europe they have a different orchestra everywhere they go.

EDINBURGH

GEORGE HUBERT

CIRCO DE ESPANA. This "suite of dances from the repertory of Carmelita Maracci" had its premiere here to a puzzled reception.

A new work should not be assessed on a single performance, but the music by four composers provided no unifying influence. The backdrop depicting a huge bull in black seemed out of key, except for dance 3.

This, **Alicia Alonso** brought near to ballet by sincere mime and smooth movements, and gave the sense of empty arena—the theme of this dance—but the choreography provided no chance for the artist to translate technique into artistry.

Dance 4 was danced by **John Kriza**, **Christine Mayer**, **Isobel Mirrow**, and **Ruth Ann Koesun**, with sparkling mime and quick, gay movements, and dance 5 was mimed as burlesque; in these dances a different decor was demanded.

Dances 1 and 2 were worthy experiments in ballet, and performed by **Liane Plane**, **Barbara Lloyd**, and **Jenny Workman**, with stirring impact, to music by **Albanese** and **Turina**.

But the five dances did not cohere into a Ballet, nevertheless the novel presentation was fitting for a Festival, where the controversy between conventional style and modern idiom is rightly given a showing.

SCHUMANN CONCERTO was given its first performance in Britain.

This abstract ballet, choreographed on **Robert Schuman's A Minor Concerto** by **Nijinska**, with scenery and music by **Stewart Chaney**, will grow on audiences because all possible balletic elements were given a place to make a simple ballet, avoiding disunity by undue emphasis on one or more elements, and neglect of the rest.

The opening ensemble had the corps de ballet in groups contrasted by colours: pastel grey and yellow, with ballerina in white and the danseur noble in mauve. These groupings had great beauty, and made an atmosphere for **Alicia Alonso** and **Igor Youskevitch** to show their quality, and they took the chance in pas de deux that gave extreme pleasure to watch.

The first movement gave serious study of ensemble and dance steps,

flowing into a second movement to show balletic steps as art, and the third conveying the atmosphere of romance, which was caught by **Alicia Alonso** and **Igor Youskevitch**.

They gave a mood of longing that touched the audience with ecstasy.

BERLIN

EVA BULOW

SEPTEMBER — Festival Month in Berlin!

September is the festival month in Berlin. Foreign ballet troupes like the American National Ballet Theatre (1st-6th of September) and the Royal Swedish Ballet (9th-11th of September) came. The latter made its Berlin debut presenting **MISS JULIE** by **Strindberg**, choreography by **Cullberg**, the soloists are **Elsa Marianne von Rosen** and **Teddy Rhodin**. Also **THE KNIGHT AND THE SIX PRINCESSES**, choreography by **Cullberg**, and **THE THREE MUSKETEERS**.

The ensemble of the Städtische Opera Berlin will stage **HAMLET** to the music by **Boris Blacher** and with choreography by **Tatiana Gsovsky**.

The leading dancers are **Gisela Deege** and **Gert Reinholm**. The programme will include a ballet using a Mozart symphony by the same choreographer.

Tatiana Gsovsky is responsible for the ballet sequences in the films "Southern Nights" and "Hit Parade" with **Gert Reinholm**. **Heinz Rosen**, known for his Munich premieres of **LA TRICORNE** and **L'INDIFFERENT** has done the choreography in the film "The Dancing Heart." **Maria Fris**, **Toni Lander**, **Michel Rayne** and **Rainer Köchermahn** appear as the principal dancers. The music is by **Norbert Schulze** and the decor and costumes by **Max Bignens** and **Ursula Stutz**.

STATE OPERA, BERLIN

The three new ballets in the State-Opera, Berlin, have choreography by the ballet mistress **Daisy Spies**. **APOLLO AND DAPHNE**, libretto by **Elfriede Löffler** and decor and costumes by **Eleonore Vesco**. Music by **Leo Spies**.

THE LAW OF THE NOBLEMAN, music by **Victor Bruns**. The story is that of a Polish noble-

man in the 19th century, who takes the bride coming from her wedding to his castle and is killed by the rebelling bridegroom and the revolting village population. The bride is **Nora Manks** and the bridegroom is **Heinz von Kusse-row**.

THE CONVERT BROCKET is a grotesque. Music by **Dmitri Kakalewskis**. A certain Herr Miesling in dressing-gown and wig is to be seen in various comic situations and falls finally into the arms of a young widow, giving his permission for the marriage of his daughter to her secret lover.

VERONA

ROBERT PATERSON

THE annual Summer season of Opera was held between the 23rd July and 16th August in the Arena di Verona—the enormous Roman amphitheatre capable of holding more than 20,000 people. The huge stage is perfectly suited to grand spectacles and processions, without which no Italian opera of the older type would be complete.

The operas presented were **AIDA**, **IL TROVATORE**, and **LA FORZA DEL DESTINO**. In the last of these we were delighted to see once again the well known Prima Ballerina Absoluta, **Nives Poli**, mention of whom has already appeared in **BALLET TODAY**.

Unfortunately, the occasions for dancing in **LA FORZA DEL DESTINO** are all too brief, indeed they scarcely provide more than a glimpse of Signora Poli's clever choreography and skill as a dancer. In Italy one has to be thankful even for these short interludes of dancing, and be hopeful that at length performances of ballet without opera will be given more regularly.

As choreographer, Signora Poli has a special gift of grouping that at times is reminiscent of Watteau, if such a comparison be admissible. With continued success wherever she appears, she is steadily fostering a better appreciation of ballet in various cities of Italy.

Ballet as an entertainment is too big for the boots of a metropolis — is there room now for a

Provincial Tradition

THE interchange between San Francisco Ballet and New York City Ballet recently suggests one aspect of ballet building absent from Britain: a provincial tradition.

The Russians had St. Petersburg and Moscow to rival each other, most European countries have two or three theatre centres. In Britain we have several outposts in Bristol, Birmingham, Glasgow and Edinburgh. But ballet? All roads lead to London and no in-between stops.

A recent correspondent to Kingsley Martin's weekly *NEW STATESMAN* took up the cause of provincialism in literature. He—a G. S. Fraser—saw a provincial tradition running through Bunyan, Burns, George Eliot, Hardy and D. H. Lawrence as contributing equally to our literature as the metropolitan tradition carried from Congreve, Pope

from
page three

Chauvire

In *GISELLE* her performance is imbued with the spirit of nineteenth century Romanticism, illuminated by her own particular tenderness which is at once remote and deeply touching. Too studied, perhaps, too refined, a little unreal, yet she seems to create line by line a human lithograph for our delight. Here she shows a respect for the great tradition in which as a dancer she was educated, and, in so doing, takes up her place among those few legendary figures who first breathed life into this most beautiful of all ballets.

Too fine-drawn for the blustering world of modern ballet, she may perhaps leave little trace behind her; but the imprint of her strangely elusive personality will rest longer in our memories than that of the more spectacular performers who seem now to eclipse her. She lingers in the mind like a phantom conjured up for us from the ballets of long ago to haunt us with their unique beauties.



A new Felix Fonteyn shot of Margot Fonteyn whose work spells both entertainment and art in the same breath.

and Henry James through T. S. Eliot and Mrs. Woolf.

The two traditions can run mutually to benefit—as the London and Edinburgh reviews of last century did. Would a provincial ballet mean anything to the full ballet structure in Britain?

Credit: more varied and less singular-influenced employment for dancers and other ballet artists.

Credit: an acclimatising of a countrywide audience to take ballet as weekly fare. Repertory companies have done this for drama.

Credit: such a potential employment-worth and audience-size that the inbred preciousness of current ballet and outsider prejudice against ballet would die a long-awaited death.

NEEDS

On the debit: full-scale ballet operation might need — as provincial repertory theatre needs — an over-balancing of commercialized fare to bring economic audiences. It might also make forced employment for substandard artists. (Though enough of this category have employment in London now).

The lack of critics in the provinces (there are no ballet critics except in London, for obvious reasons) would

mean a carrying-over of the puff-notice common to the theatre. These inflate an artist's conceit, deflate his capacity to learn.

I believe that a provincial decentralizing of ballet would be excellent as it would remove the current unfair employment practises engendered by having too few potential employers.

But only large towns—Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh—would support worthwhile companies or repertoires. Private patrons being extinct, the onus would be on the Arts Council—not very trustworthily when we remember the Metropolitan and St. James's—and local county councils. A few private citizens might have enough capital to start companies and continue if audiences supported adequately.

The question: would provincial ballet help the ballet tradition in Britain — that is easily answered. Yes.

But would provincial audiences support their own localized ballet. That is no simple question. I have seen, too often, a first-rate provincial repertory company play to empty houses whilst local, lamentable amateurs had full houses. That might well happen in ballet.

But the experiment would be well worth trying.

I MADE the innocent mistake of seeing CINDERELLA in my mind before seeing Ashton's mind on stage. A record player and the first set of Prokofiev's score introduced me to CINDERELLA midway through an Edinburgh Festival some years ago.

On stage the work had high-lights from the ballerina I had left unthought but the beauty of the waltz was lost, the 'spine tingling' of some of Prokofiev's staccato parts was lost.

During their pre-U.S. season at Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells gave a number of performances of the ballet. The first with Margot Fonteyn.

Fonteyn — has this to be said again? — saves CINDERELLA from falling to pieces from sheer desultoriness. I find myself waiting for her to come back like a fresh breath between yawns.

The production itself is so tatty, the decor so unforgivably shoddy for a major company. Ashton's sometime excellent work is framed in as unhelpful a manner as conceivably possible. This stood out the more as the first night followed Petit's debut. Compared to Petit's voluptuous stages, these creased, wishy-washy drops were provincial pantomime standard. Bad provincial pantomime, at that.

As to dancing, Fonteyn's first act was, I thought, very slightly marred by her maturity. This came over especially in her business with the father. She approached him as a fullborn woman, not a forlorn girl. Her second and third acts were as fullsomely flawless as ever. Her most winning smile, most wondrous face

CINDERELLA

— after a lapse

: : : first nights and cast changes are covered — but what of a ballet after a lapse of seeing? Here is a first follow-up on Ashton's CINDERELLA which main-stayed the short pre-tour Wells season.

... these topped a body perfectly sure of its rounded effectiveness.

The partnering of Michael **Somes**, was, in part, unsure and his own dancing is showing a lack of ballon and general facility that is rather puzzling. **Somes** should be of first rank now. His recent work is not.

Of the fairies, only **Winter's** black and white **Rosemary Lindsay** manages to surmount the decor. The other three are irretrievable from a watercolour mess of pale greens and insipid yellows. **Lindsay** has, as backing, the ice which shows the scenist's first hint of originality. **Lindsay** has an interesting firmness of line and a developing stage presence.

The Fairy Godmother of **Julia Farron** is illthought. A more kindly, less "second ballerina" approach is needed to the role. **Lindsay** might well be tried in it — she can smile effectively.

Cinderella's Father — **Franklin White** — is a one dimensional por-

trait; the fact more a white mask. Ashton might well rethink the role and give more body to the father.

Alexander Grant's Jester is lively, insinuated well as a second act continuity thread.

The Stepsisters — **Ashton** and **Kenneth Macmillan** — improve in caricature the last performances I watched.

But only **Fonteyn** gives curtain-call to a ballet grown clammy from the handshake of long usage. Could not a new decor altogether be mounted and so frame a ballet which needs setting only to make it an appealing fairytale?

ELVIN'S NIGHT

Violetta Elvin lacked some of the commanding lustre of **Fonteyn**, and perhaps some of the first act softness. But she was nearer the 'young girl' characterization.

She definitely brought more projectable gaiety to the ball than did **Fonteyn** but the grand sweep was missing. **John Hart**, however, danced with good elevation and neat partnering sense.

It seems incredible that tiny production details get lost at **Covent Garden**. Part of **Cinderella's** costume was unchanged when she awakened, and the miniature galleon refused to even stunt its way off stage as it had the previous evening. This performance it became bogged after one lurch and remained there until curtain drop.

— AND NERINA

Nadia Nerina brought an appealing fund of 'onlooker' acting to **Cinderella** but was incapable of disguising her working.

Act three gave her no joy and her performance therefore impressed me more as an audition well-done than a finished performance.

For this performance **Brian Shaw** danced the Jester well and **Alexis Rassiné's** Prince was invigorating if not high-poised.

But what a deadpan face this **Cinderella** turns on the world? We should have a will-wisping girl slow crying the first act from her memory fixation. Sad, pathetic, endearingly young and wide-eye and beautiful. Act two should be the fairy princess of any girl's dream — glossing the stage with wide - spanned, more - than - life strokes. Act three the heart-break of awakening, the back-to-work hatefulness . . . then the leap of dream into fact, the Prince levering the glass sandal onto her foot, levering her heart into arms that want her. A fairy tale in glimmering lines.

But everything is so literal, so competent . . . Three **Cinderellas** and not a single spell.

— and Petit's First Night from The Front

★ This month's scene was set at the **Stoll Theatre** for **Roland Petit's** first night. The company being French there were, of course, a large number of French women in the audience.

★ So was **Dior's** new **New Look**. Not that anyone turned up in a knee length dress, but hemlines were definitely higher — just above mid-calf in fact.

★ **Satin** and **velvet** were favourite fabrics. Of the evening dresses present — most had the new straight - in - the - front - full - at-the-back look.

★ The back fullness was from drapes, unpressed pleats and bustles.

★ The latter were often a little too large for comfort—there had

to be much settling and rearranging before the wearer was comfortably seated.

★ As soon as she was, of course, she had to rise to allow someone to pass! Evening suits were very popular, too. Tight waisted (the waist often starting just under the bust), short jacketed, stem skirted.

★ Materials were varied but dark prints were to the fore.

★ Fashion highlight in the form of huge earrings in amber bubble-glass drops, which hung like a large bunch of grapes from mid-ear to shoulder. Very effective with a straight, simply cut dress.

★ Fashion lowlight. So many sheers showing so many straps! (it was not meant to be a tongue-twister).

FASHION SCENE AT BALLET

On the stage of the Princes Theatre in London a pale-faced boy with dark tousled hair struggled gallantly but unsuccessfully to master a simple dance routine that had been demonstrated to him. After watching for a few minutes the producer of the show threw up his arms in exasperation and marched off the stage shouting: "Well my lad, you may make an actor, but my God, you'll never be a dancer."

The boy was Anton Dolin, known then by his real name of Patrick Healey-Kay, and the producer was the late Sir Seymour Hicks. The year was 1916.

Seymour Hicks was a man of shrewd judgment especially about matters concerning the stage but on this occasion he was wrong because as time has proved, Dolin was destined to become one of the world's greatest male dancers with the distinction of being the first-ever English *premier danseur* of Diaghileff's Russian Ballet.

In spite of Hick's scathing comment young Pat managed to keep his part of Peter the black cat, in

"Bluebell in Fairyland," at the Princes Theatre and received £2 weekly for twelve performances. It gave him the much-needed start on the West End Stage for which he has always been grateful. He never looked back.

Exceptional

Dolin's exceptional talent is backed by fanatical energy and tremendous enthusiasm for the theatre. His day begins around nine o'clock in the morning and goes on non-stop till the small hours of the morning; only when the day's work is done does he allow himself a good meal and over that he will be planning the next tour or the clothes the company will wear.

As Artistic Director of Festival Ballet, in London, Dolin is responsible for the performances and welfare of his dancers. Choice of the ballets, choreography, dancers, costumes, scenery and organisation is largely his business. Owner and director general, Dr. Julian Braunschwig, and stage director, Benn Toff,

are consulted but as Toff explained, "Dolin's ideas are nearly always carried unanimously." Dolin is also premier danseur étoile of the Festival Ballet.

At 48 years of age his muscular physique is exceptional. Because of this, he appears to be taller than his 5ft. 7ins. This is often disconcerting to his fans—and to Dolin. Once when he emerged with John Gilpin, premier danseur of the Festival Ballet, from the stage door of a Dublin Theatre they encountered the usual mob of fans who surged round Gilpin.

"When's Dolin coming out, we want his autograph," one girl remarked and when Gilpin explained she was standing right next to Dolin there was an awkward pause before a loud and disappointed "ooh" spread through their ranks. "What, *that* little fellow. Coo, aren't you *little*?" commented their angler.

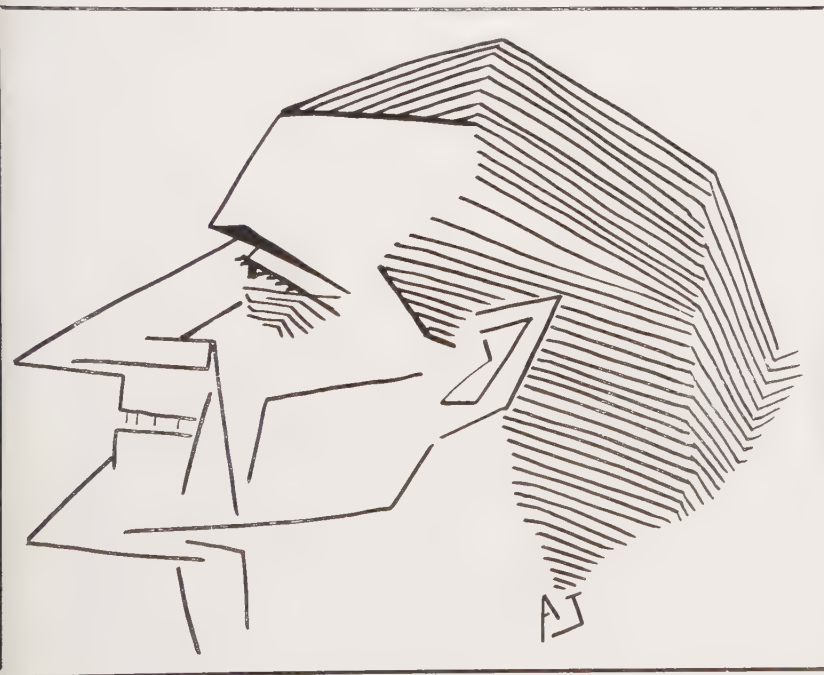
Happily

Usually Dolin is considerate to his fans and signs up quite happily, though occasionally he takes a mischievous delight in his unusual gift of being able to frighten people away just by staring at them through his piercing dark Spanish-type eyes. This happened once at Oxford where he and the Company were dancing. Dolin was in his dressing room when he saw through the mirror a group of undergraduates clustered round the open door. He realised they had gate-crashed the stage-door, and feeling annoyed, he promptly fixed his eyes directly upon them in the mirror and watched with unconcealed amusement while they melted away one by one without a word.

His sense of humour is often unkind—his Mother, who will be 85 this December—pays tribute to his effort to overcome what she describes as "a perverted sense of humour" which has lost him good friends. Typical example occurred when he was lecturing on the dance to an audience of students. A member of the audience asked him to explain the difference between the classical dance and the Negro dance. Retorted Dolin, poker-faced: "The only difference is in the colour."

One of Dolin's most conscientious critics is his Mother whom he adores. It was she who championed him when he first insisted on becoming a dancer and took him along to have lessons from Lily and Grace Cone, then to study acting at the Italia Conti School in London. His family had no theatrical connections and both his Mother and Father did their best to dissuade their son from choosing a dancing career. But it was useless. Dolin danced almost before he could walk and worried the life out of anyone near him who was able to play the piano for him to dance to.

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Text by ANN RAWLINGS

Sketch by A. JUDAH

dolin

Fonteyn in Spain

THE primary colours in a woman's life are love, a home, marriage and children. Only a few shade in pastel colours like a sparetime career of their own, handiwork and social pastimes.

Apart from these there are the very few who decide to mark out their own lives in a special way. The actresses, the painters, the dancers . . .

Margot Fonteyn is one of them.

Prima Ballerina of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, sharing the world's ballet heirarchy with only a

few Russian and French dancers, Fonteyn has carried English ballet to the heights. Not by her initiative or compelling off-stage personality.

She has little.

But by her willing obedience to her directors, and the unasked something of her own that she brings with her . . . by this Fonteyn has lifted our ballet from the musty, lacklustre smallness of its background to the tremendous acclaim it has assured itself today.

Fonteyn doesn't have Toumanova's poise for no-warning meetings, she lacks Karsavina's wit and wisdom, nothing of Pavlova's steel-tongued mulishness has been inherited by her. Fonteyn? "I just dance."

There is so much else to Margot Fonteyn, but so little of it matters to her. I introduced her a few months ago in the Opera House, Covent Garden, to the young girl, a ballet student, who was with me. Fonteyn ignored me after a brief hello, devoted herself to the student. Ballet meant more to her than a goodwill-getting smile for the critic. Her smile to me was distant, to the child—sparkling.

Most dancers would have ignored the student. Not Fonteyn! She has devoted herself to dancing and lets few opportunities pass for breeding the germ.

Her August visit to Spain was part of the process.

Photographs by BARON





BALLET FINDS ITS SATURATION POINT

LAST month, Ballet Digest gave a rough guess at the saturation point for ballet attendance in London. Guess: 4,000 to 5,000 an evening.

That is the Festival Hall and Covent Garden or the Stoll can take concurrent ballet (not all three) or either one or two of these three major houses with one or two smaller ones.

That during August London had Covent Garden, Festival Hall and Sadler's Wells staging ballet made very discernable that one of such a trio must suffer. The Wells did.

With Petit at the Stoll, Covent Garden open and Festival Ballet just closing their season—the limit must be surpassed.

WHY NO MEETING

What is especially bad here is that a "grand council of world ballet" could thrash out booking problems and avoid going above audience ceilings. If London can supply 5,000 seatholders an evening, no more than 5,000 need be available. Then it rests with the companies to lure in the basic potential audience.

But, obviously again, each company will have some 'lure' so putting three or four into rivalry will mean under-capacity or well under-capacity for all of them.

It is a maxim of business that healthy competition is competition inside the potential market. If it is a certain impossibility for the competitors to take a worthwhile piece of the market each, the potential has been overestimated and must be examined again—not just by the loser but by all concerned. Because over-estimation will cut into the play of each competitor.

I learned this lesson a long time ago but it was concreted for me by James Drawbell, the Newnes and Pearson director. I took him up on a quick sentence in which he said that he had no wish for his rival to be knocked out.

Why? I asked.

"Because if, suddenly, a several hundred thousand drop was met by my rival it would be obvious that a serious position was ahead in the whole field. The buying faith in the field would be undermined."

An empty house does nobody good. The casual balletgoer is 'put off' by the emptiness and will avoid the rivals as much as he will avoid a return to the empty theatre.

Co-operation is obviously the answer. The chemics of balletgoing must be tabulated and the saturation point becomes a principle.

BENEFITS TO WHOM

The theatrical unions in the United States have begun a rigid policing of charity and benefit performances by artists.

To the public at large a stoppage on these charity shows may appear a hardheart gesture. But dancers should have no hesitation in refusing their services free and explaining why.

The U.S. unions are now levelling fines against members who break the rules. The Champions and Donald O'Connor are two recent cases which were fined.

The career or earning life of a dancer is tiny compared to that of other workers; dancers should, for their own sake and that of their fellow-artists, refuse any performance unless a fee is offered.

For charities a dancer personally wishes to support, the best course is to demand a normal fee and then donate what part of it you wish as a personal spontaneous contribution to the cause.

... briefly

BALLET IN THREAD

By A. Judah



Rosario and Roberta Inglesias have cancelled all Spanish bookings for their Spanish Ballet Company until 1955 owing to huge overseas contracts Greek National Ballet has been touring central Europe . . . MYSTERIES OF FLAMENCO with Antonio, Vargas, Pilar Lopez and Roberto Ximenez has been filmed and is now showing in Spain . . . New work in the de Cuevas repertoire is GREY ANGEL to Debussy by Skibine . . . Manuel Rosado—the Philippine dancer—has joined the Montijo Ballet in Madrid . . . Alicia Markova grossed three times more at the box office in Los Angeles than Dr. Alfred Kinsey . . . More ballet than ever before will be telecast by the major U.S. networks this Winter . . . Alba Arnova has an acting role in TIMES GONE BY, a new Italian film directed by Allesandro Blasetti . . . Vassily Trunoff has left Festival Ballet . . . Colette Marchand speaking to the AIR FORCE DAILY on the London critics' lacklustre notice of her work: "Wait till they see my CARMEN, that's more classical."



● A tape recorded discussion between professional writers on ballet trends and directions.

● The writers who talked spontaneously into the Ballet Today recorder this month are

EDITH BARKING

A. V. COTON

and

The Editor

● The Topic is

CINEMA DANCE

[E.B.: Ballet has reached a cinema jackpot through the British **RED SHOES**, the American **HANS ANDERSON** and **STORY OF THREE LOVES**. That ballet has a place in current screen-fare as certainly as gilded chorus lines were once the musical's standby is, I think, unquestionable.

It is only a few weeks since **PICTUREGOER**, the film weekly with over half-a-million circulation, devoted a centre-spread to the theme "Ballet is Box-Office." You, Peter, once edited a film weekly and must see screen ballet through somewhat film-trained eyes.

[P.C.-R.: True. But its the friction between the two which worries me. The **PICTUREGOER** article which you mention shows the potential ballet interest for film-makers. Not an art magazine or anything approaching it, but a fan weekly, **PICTUREGOER** cares no rap for ballet. The only reason Editor Connery Chappell could have had for allocating his centre to ballet is that the theme now means something to the average film fan. But does the screen-treated ballet mean anything to the ballet-goer? A first word from you, A. V. Coton.

[A.V.C.: Balletgoers seem either to adore screened versions of ballets—or to loathe them altogether; those who like, do so because—I feel sure—they are simply getting another piece of familiar ballet, however unlike the original staged performance.

Those who loathe—and I loathe most of them myself—do so because we are aware how poor a substitute the screened stuff is. Ballet, like all dancing, is essentially film material, but film-makers have cashed in on the Big Ballet Boom simply by getting stage ballet on view or getting stage-minded choreographers to invent something that can be done in front of a camera.

Mostly these people have failed to create the sort of ballet that would be effective for cinema. Big slabs of standard stage ballets photographed in action—for that's all most film-ballet is—give nothing to the cinema.

[E.B.: Surely the whole answer here is that film ballet hits, not the ballet public but the basic cinema audience: the family. Where stage ballet, flat, clever, serious . . . could never appeal to such an audience, ballet in the hands of Powell (**RED SHOES**), Chaplin (**LIMELIGHT**) and right now Goldwyn (**HANS ANDERSON**) is a colourful, polished spectacle for just this family audience.

[P.C.-R.: In other words, ballet is eyecatcher as was Ziegfeld's staircase-full of gowned chorus girls. The use of ballet you mention or

support is not, in fact, a cinematic ballet at all but merely a dash of ballet as extra fillip. What I want to find out is if this new mass audience of the cinema will accept a cinematic ballet?

[E.B.: But surely what ballet the cinema does show is cinema ballet?

[A.V.C.: The number of cinema-goers who are persuaded that they are looking at film ballet when they see the average ballet film, so-called, is a tribute to the skill of film publicity makers. And why should the average producer spend time and money helping choreographers to create film ballet, when the public goes on being satisfied with the imitation?

So long as the camera can gather a certain amount of stage ballet (done on a studio floor) that is good enough for most peoples' tastes—including directors as well as public. But film is two dimensional, ballet is three-dimensional; obviously if you are going to try to film ballet you have to mould it into new shapes; using its three-dimensional qualities in a new way—that is, the best way that enables the cinecamera to reproduce the illusion that stage ballet gives.

Real film ballet—as and when it happens—needs three essentials that, so far, I haven't seen in any of the supposed 'ballet films.' These are: a new style of choreography, a different style of dancing from that used on the stage, and a fresh kind of story together with appropriate decor and music; these three using only parts of stage ballet conventions.

[E.B.: You would say then that the film audience has not yet seen ballet, merely amputated and pale limbs of stage ballet mummied-up? You don't think that the ballet already filmed in these pictures I have mentioned can be classed as a ballet form on its own. If there is to be something we have not yet seen, how can you be sure that it could take its audience as surely as this successfully filmed ballet has done?

[A.V.C.: The public has always in the past been persuaded (again, chiefly by well planned publicity) to accept *anything new* that films can offer—provided it doesn't look raw and half-amateur.

You can make film ballets quite as exciting or as beautiful as anything else that has ever been filmed; and a real film ballet can be popular without being vulgar or, alternatively, highbrow.

For film technicians, the few live-wire directors and cameramen who want to try new things, film ballets are possible now. The people of the ballet world are not interested; why should they be? If they go into films they get more money, more prestige—or at least more publicity.

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And Still Stand Still

Readers write . . .

BALLET TODAY'S postbag overflowed with comments on **ALICE IN WONDERLAND** last month. Here are two.

J. H. Wyatt writes: "I have never disagreed more strongly. Your whole article is based on an assumption so false as to be incredible. I feel pity. So you have not read Lewis Carroll—and have the audacity to assume this is an advantage. If you were to see a Coronation ballet would you need to see the crown placed on her head? Why not complete your preliminary education?"

: : : Mr Wyatt sends his letter in without address or identification. His pity for my confessed ignorance of Carroll and wishes for the completion of my education are kind. But most certainly I would expect a storytelling Coronation ballet to crown a head just as I expected the plot-conscious **ALICE** to make clear its path to me as much as to the Carroll initiates. This is no case of an abstract work not understood, **ALICE** set out as a simple, entertaining dance story and befuddled any viewer who had not read the lengthy novel.

.... AND RIGHT

Frank Cabot writes: "Whether not reading **ALICE** hindered your view of it or not . . . I saw the production and missed its virtues although **ALICE** and **LOOKING GLASS** were constant childhood reading. Good to see a critic confess his flaws and go on to explain his attack in an honest and entertaining unmalicious way."

: : : : malicious reviewing is for personal spites and unthinking writers. **BALLET TODAY** employs neither.

YOUR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Copies of **BALLET TODAY**, numbers 1-6 required. State price to Box 101.

Young student with child-aptitude required three/four evenings a week as baby-sitter; £1 and fares. References. Box 102.

DEEP THOUGHT

Margaret J. Maxworthy of the Francis Holland School writes: "Your critics inspire deep thought. Although I do disagree with the one that called **ALEKO** a masterpiece. Can you, by the way, suggest a remedy for women who sit behind one at the ballet and start by announcing they have never seen any of the works on the programme—then tear to shreds the dancers they are about to see . . . ending with "I can't imagine them being much good"."

: : : Although the London season is reviewed by the Editor, foreign productions—as was the Venice-presented **ALEKO**—are covered by other competent experts. Once having commissioned these writers the onus is on them to explain their conclusions. No rewriting is done of outside contributors' reviews. As to the remedy: I have known critics to do the much worse crime of saying exactly the same of a performance they left unseen. I suggest you merely ask such bores to lower their voices to the level of their minds. Politely!

THE 3A BALLET

P. Kelly writes:

"There seems to be a remarkable amount of nonsense about the 3A ballet—Pamela Price's article (August **BALLET TODAY**) falls into this category. Ballet should be judged by quality, not size, it's lunacy for the Wells directors to depreciate the one act ballet whilst continuing to put on programmes of such ballets. Do they want to discourage people from coming to see them."

: : : Quality, not size, admittedly. But surely one can gauge the potential market for either pint or

● one shilling a word, count box numbers as two words. Cash with order to J. Stonebanks, 33 Crawford Place, W.1.

Lessons in your own home. Well-known teacher open for private tuition early 1954. Write, please, to Box 103 in the first instance.

★ Alice befriended
★ Aleko deplored
★ 3A gauged
—by you, in your letters

gill pots and draw conclusions? De Valois' stand for the full-length ballet is a wise, well-thought one which would not be helped by throwing out some excellent one-act works already in the repertoire.

THE IMPUDENCE

Geoffrey Dean writes:

"Oh, this **DAILY MIRROR**-like new **BALLET TODAY**. I took my copy back to my newsagent and told him to cancel it—he tells me he is selling three times more than before. But is this any praise for an art magazine?"

: : : Sales are the only praise for any magazine. Balletgoers like contemporary, bright and entertaining journalism and page "look" as much as any other reader. Remember that the **DAILY MIRROR** is the most successful daily newspaper on earth and that a point **MIRROR**-raised leads to action while the same point is mooted for months or years in **THE TIMES**. We are on the side of the angels . . . of light!

THINKING

Mary Lodge writes: "The article on Balanchin should have been called **The Thing That Needs Saying Badly**."

... AND RETHINKING

L. White writes:

The article by Peter Craig-Raymond merely shows his now infamous antagonism to this great choreographer."

: : : Mr. White must have read the article as heartily as I read **ALICE**! I called Balanchin a great choreographer and one of fine talent. How this can be construed as my 'infamous antagonism' is unclear. I may disagree with Balanchin's channeling of his talent, but to deny the talent itself would place me prematurely in the company of the Clement Scotts' of criticism.

Letters from readers should be addressed to the Editor, short, and enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope if a reply is required.



KING'S THEATRE

IN the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the principal playhouse in London where operas and ballets were presented was the King's. This stood in the Haymarket on the approximate site of the present Her Majesty's.

The theatre was designed and built by Sir John Vanbrugh and the first proprietor was Christopher Rich. During the first few years of the theatre's existence, as Queen Anne was still on the throne, it was known as the Queen's but later, on the accession of George the First, became the King's. Even after 1847, when most of the operatic principals transferred their allegiance to Covent Garden, important seasons of opera and ballet continued to be held there until 1859, with the exception of the period between 1853 and 1856 when the theatre was closed.

As early as 1737 the great French choreographer, Noverre, was connected with the theatre, being responsible for the dances in Paisiello's opera *IL RE TEODORE*.

In 1871 he became ballet master and retained his post until the theatre was burned down some eight years later. His dancers were mainly French and included the distinguished artists, the younger Gardel, Bournonville, Nivelon, Mademoiselle Theodore and Madame Simonet.

On the opening night of Noverre's first season as ballet master his *LES AMANTS REUNIS* was staged and received a tremendous ovation from a very distinguished audience. A few nights later when it was repeated the theatre was honoured with a visit

from the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, and his very brilliant entourage. The "Public Advertiser" said of Noverre that he was a choreographer of undoubted genius who combined the gifts of a poet, painter and actor.

It is known that Giovanna Boccelli, who was painted by Gainsborough, was a dancer at the theatre at this time as was young Laborie, who later made a great name for himself in France.

THE SECOND

In 1789 the first King's Theatre was destroyed by fire and a new playhouse was erected, approxi-

mately on the same site, which was opened in 1793. Noverre resumed his post of ballet master for a short time but eighteen months later was obliged to retire on account of his increasing bad health.

One of his last productions was an allegorical ballet staged to celebrate the victory of Lord Hawke over the French fleet at Brest. Charles Dideot, a famous French dancer and director staged many ballets at the King's between 1796 and 1800. The troupe then included Mademoiselle Hilligsberg and Deshayes.

One of his most interesting productions was *FLORE ET ZEPHIRE*, the ballet in which Marie Taglioni made her London debut at the King's

in 1830. The dancers from the theatre, in 1797, took part in a performance given at Covent Garden for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the men killed at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent. Henry Bishop, the composer of the famous song, 'Home Sweet Home,' wrote several ballets for the company about this time.

In 1815 the position of ballet master was filled by Armand Vestris, the first husband of the more celebrated actress and singer, Madame Vestris. His own ballet, *GONSALVES DE CORDOVA*, was presented with considerable success. His activities as a choreographer must have been much interrupted by his enforced mobility to escape arrest for debt. At long last his creditors seem to have caught up with him and he fled to Paris taking his wife and a young dancer, Mademoiselle Meri, also from the King's.

VESTRIS

He subsequently secured engagements for himself and this dancer at Naples, leaving his wife stranded in Paris. This resulted in the break up of the menage of the house of Vestris and Madame, at a later date, consoled herself with the younger Charles Mathews.

In the first half of the last century nobody in England was more ballerina conscious than the Earl of Fife and he introduced to the King's theatre a young and charming Spanish dancer, Marie Mercandotti who had been the rage of Paris since she was fifteen.

A good impression of the interior of the King's theatre can be obtained from the engraving illustrated. The boxes at the back of the pit and level with it, for some unknown reason were called 'Resurrection' boxes. The omnibus boxes were those on either side of the stage and below it. Those sitting there had the right

By REGINALD P. MANDER

of going behind scenes and flirting with the primadonnas and the ballerinas.

The 'Fops Alley' was a wide gangway between the few rows of the stalls and the pit. It was here that the Dandies used to lounge, hoping to be admired by the fair ones in the boxes, when they ogled from this vantage point. In 1821 the then manager, Ebers added a green room which was used partly for ballet practice.

In the same year a particularly brilliant era of ballet commenced at the King's. Previous to this, once first class dancers had been secured very little care had been taken with the general decor and scenery. This

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Ballet Month - Coming Events

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET at Sadler's Wells Theatre

- Oct. 2: CARTE BLANCHE (first London performance), BLOOD WEDDING, LAC (Act 2).
- 3 (mat.): COPPELIA.
- 5: CARTE BLANCHE, BLOOD WEDDING, LAC (Act 2).
- 7: SYLPHIDES, HAUNTED BALLROOM, CARTE BLANCHE.
- 10 (mat.): PASTORALE, FETE ESTRANGE, CARTE BLANCHE.
- 14: LAC (Act 2), BLOOD WEDDING, VALSES-NOBLES, FACADE.
- 16: SYLPHIDES, BLOOD WEDDING, CARTE BLANCHE.
- 17 (mat.): SYLPHIDES, HAUNTED BALLROOM, CARTE BLANCHE.
- 19: COPPELIA.
- 21: FETE ESTRANGE, HAUNTED BALLROOM, VALSES NOBLES, FACADE.
- 24 (mat.): CARTE BLANCHE, LAC (Act 2), VALSES NOBLES, FACADE.

WALTER GORE BALLET at Princes Theatre

- Sept. 22-26: HOOPS, VIS-A-VIS, LIGHT FANTASTIC, CRUCIFIX.
- 28-30: CYCLASM, STREET GAMES, MR. PUNCH, TANCREDI & GLORINDA.
- 30 (Mat. only): STREET GAMES, VIS-A-VIS, CYCLASM, MR. PUNCH.
- Oct. 1-3: HOOPS, ANTONIA, VIS-A-VIS, LIGHT FANTASTIC.
- 5-7: VIS-A-VIS, GENTLE POLTERGEIST, STREET GAMES, CYCLASM.
- 7 (Mat. only): VIS-A-VIS, CYCLASM, STREET GAMES, LIGHT FANTASTIC.
- 8-10: HOOPS, CRUCIFIX, SUITE FOR SMALL DANCERS, MR. PUNCH.
- 12-14: STREET GAMES, ANTONIA, VIS-A-VIS, CYCLASM.
- 14 (Mat. only): STREET GAMES, CYCLASM, VIS-A-VIS, MR. PUNCH.
- 15-17: HOOPS, CRUCIFIX, LIGHT FANTASTIC, SUITE FOR SMALL DANCERS.

● RENE JEANMAIRE



PILAR LOPEZ COMPANY
at Stoll Theatre
Sept. 30-Oct. 24 inclusive.

London Ballet Circle

GEOFFREY Corbett will speak on Sunday, October 18th, at 3 p.m. Mr. Corbett, who will be remembered as associate conductor to Sadler's Wells Ballet with the late Constant Lambert and as conductor to Ballet Rambert, is now musical director to Festival Ballet; he will refer to the Festival Ballet repertoire in his talk.

Non-members of the Circle will be welcome, at the usual charge of 2/6d. at the door. The address will be Wilcox Studios, Bryanston St., Marble Arch, behind the Cumberland Hotel.

FILM PROGRAMME

A few tickets, price 3/6d. each, remain for the first film programme of the autumn series, which the Circle is holding at the cinema of the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, on October 30th, at 7.30 p.m.

The programme will include a new Hungarian colour film and a new Russian film, 'Uzbek Dances,' which shows a modern ballet school in the east of the U.S.S.R. 'International Dances' and 'Graduation Ball' are to be shown by popular request, as well as short French and Australian films. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when applying to the Treasurer, Mr. H. Humberstone, 8, Carol Street, N.W.1.

Desk Service

Information Column for Readers' Enquiries

R. J. Frank writes: "Is the Jeanmaire of HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSON the Rene Jeanmaire of ballet?"

Yes, indeed. Goldwyn cut her name but left her dancing. Rene is now to do **GIRL WITH PINK TIGHTS** on Broadway.



Ted Carl writes: "When are we to see Moira Shearer again? She was magnificent in TALES OF HOFFMAN."

Now on general release is **STORY OF THREE LOVES** which has Moira Shearer and James Mason in one sequence. Moira is also rumoured as a guest artist with Festival Ballet on tour.



Peter Merton writes: "What happened to Vera Volkova?"

Madame Volkova left West Street for Milan, is now fairly settled in Copenhagen. The Danish season showed some of her trademarked polish and reminded London dancers of their loss. A great teacher.



Mr. Ren writes: "At what age are children accepted for ballet training with the Royal Danish School?"

I have no definite reference here but am told that children are accepted at between four and five. At this age, I take it, only musical and game-rhythmic training will be given. I certainly doubt the serious training starting at under eight.



Miss Schustre writes: "Is there an American magazine dealing with ballet in the way that BALLET TODAY does?"

BALLET TODAY attempts a wide American coverage but for American-published magazines — there are three. **DANCING STAR** edited and published by Gordon Keith from 376 Almaden Avenue, San Jose 10, California; **DANCE** published from 1841 Broadway, N.Y. 23; and **DANCE NEWS** published (but with a several month gap each year) by Anatole Chujoy from 119 W. 57th Street, N.Y. 19.

love even to fierce holding his hands as they are struck down together as oddities.

Oddities indeed. And oddity of a ballet that concerns itself with love felt, not love fictioned and flipped over.

Roland Petit's wolf is a lithe, lonely creation—animal as animal is when trembling in uncertainty and aloneness. The girl of **Violette Verdy** makes her the ballerina, if unstarred, of the company.

Their long, long pas de deux is, to me, the most soft-handled staging of the act of love which ballet has ever contrived. Not one extraneous lift of hand or slide of leg makes artifice out of the cling of love, the passionate together of this gentle, founding wolf and the girl who gives herself to him as she finds a wolf more real than man.

THE THOUGHT

This whole ballet, from plot to premiere, evidences the thought that went into it. Music by **Henri Dutilleux** backgrounds well, the costumes are excellent, the decor by **Carzou** is—no other word—perfect. A deep, third dimensional forest of soft, spunglass trees and foliage with an all-seeing clear blue light behind the far branches. A lovely stage.

Petit's choreography is his best. Every handclasp a symbol, like the final unbreakable lock of arms between girl and wolf as they are murdered by the villagers. The points of choreographic interest are as many as the ideas themselves. The whole work, especially the lovers pervading pas de deux, should be seen by a balletgoing world staided and stunted on the anaemic pretences of the rut-of-the-mill choreographer.

I don't think Petit missed a single opportunity for creative worth in staging **LE LOUP**. I rate it unforgettable.

BLONDE CARMEN

Colette Marchand's CARMEN was sadly outclassed by **Helene Constantine's** Bandit. Constantine, too, made better of **DEUIL** than Marchand had done the previous week.

If **CARMEN** should do anything, it should excite in its principal woman. Marchand's blonde, passive Carmen left me as cold as—I felt—the role left Marchand. But the pace of the ballet is still heated, even if one wishes for **Rene Jeanmaire** again.

Clave's decors are in the magnificent category; what a wealth of scenic genius Petit has! **Clave, Carzou, Beaurepaire** . . . a trio to

Petit's

Season ★

from page five

dress any stage.

The surprise of this company, again, is a triple one. Three dancers at least are better than the starred ballerina. **Violette Verdy** whose **LE LOUP** is a masterpiece of sensitive working. **Helene Constantine** whose Bandit in **CARMEN** and Lady in **DEUIL EN 24 HEURES** show her as vibrant as a ruffled young tiger. And **Ursula Kubler** whose Couple—with the excellent **Joe Milan**—and Cigarette Girl in **CARMEN** both project well.

Petit might halt his great genius for extrovert dancing just long enough to see that his company has some very real potential. Petit himself? His **Don Jose** in **CARMEN** is as swervingly dramatic theatre as the enveloping cloak Clave has given him.

If not a pearl, **LA PERLE** is at least a small gem. A very small gem, it is true, but studded with the white glow of **Violette Verdy** this **Gsovsky** ballet to **Pascal** music and theatrical decor by **Zao-Wou-Ki** is a neat fragment.

— AND THE LADY

We waited a long preceding interval for **Orson Welles' THE**

LADY IN THE ICE and we waited for a ballet original. Welles' genius is not in slow studies but in lightning contortions and first-sight shocks.

In the germ of his idea, the first visualization, the shocks were there.

An original ballet was, too.

In the ballet as staged, there were two flashes of originality—the unveiling of the girl immersed in the ice block (excellently contrived), and the denouement unveiling of the boy.

But in between not only the ice had melted—**Petit's** interest (or the time at his disposal) had gone too.

The pas de deux for the girl (**Marchand**) and the boy (**George Reich**) was the only actual dance of the ballet, but Petit gave nothing to the plot. Here was obviously needed some new projection of coldness meeting its first heat. But **Petit** made of it a normal rut-of-the-mill sequence.

Prime disappointment of the season: not because poor was done poorly, but because several inventive talents could not make a twenty minute ballet from a two minute plot.



Decor sketch for the first scene of *Le Loup*. This shows little, however, of the beauty of **Carzou's** setting.

RUSSIAN BALLETS by Adrian Stokes. Sixth impression (Faber and Faber, 8/6d.).

Mr. Stokes' fine critical faculty cannot fail to aid his reader's appreciation of the well-known ballets he analyses, but it is marred by an enthusiasm that is untempered and an involved imagination. The book is well illustrated.

OPERATION BALLERINA by Selwyn. (Hodder & Stoughton, 10/6d.).

The heroine of this thriller is prima ballerina of the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, and the action is concerned with the frantic efforts of her English lover to aid her to escape to this country in order that they might marry. The balletic interest is almost nil, but it will while away a train journey.

SAVE ME THE WALTZ by Zelda Fitzgerald. (Grey Walls Press, 10/6d.).

Zelda Fitzgerald's life was tragic. Not only did she lose her reason, but she perished in the flames that destroyed the asylum in which she was confined.

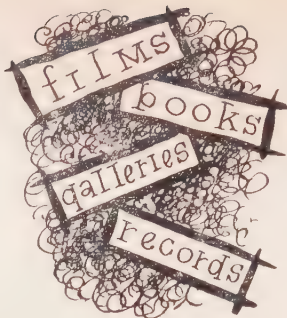
She was married to F. Scott Fitzgerald, the brilliant American novelist, and her one book, largely autobiographical, tells of their life together.

They moved recklessly and with élan through the hectic world of the nineteen-twenties, and in the end this world destroyed them.

She was young, beautiful and, fired by the Diaghilev Ballet, she wished to dance.

There are some vivid descriptions of classes in the Paris studio of a *émigré* Russian ballerina, whose identity is thinly veiled, and amusing sidelights on opera-ballet in Italy.

There is much that is drawn with skill and feeling, but the uneasy style, and ceaseless straining for the



unusual adjective or adverb grows tiresome. Now published for the first time in this country, it shows a promise never to be fulfilled, and its chief interest is for admirers of Scott Fitzgerald whose portrait is contained within its pages.

P.C.

CONCERTO No. 2 (Chopin), *Malczuzynski* (piano), *Philharmonia Orchestra* (Kletzki). **FANTASIE** Op. 49 (Chopin). *Malczuzynski* (piano). *Columbia* 33 CX 1066.

Many will have enjoyed Ballet Theatre's interpretation of **CONSTANTIA** to Chopin's concerto and this recording can be recommended without reservation. Both pianist and orchestra have delicately sensed Chopin's feelings for the young Polish singer, Constantia Gladowska. The surface is excellent and the contrast between pianissimo and fortissimo is well handled. Too often in long-players this is over-exaggerated and one has to tune one's set at the expense of the fortissimo passages or vice versa.

CONCERTO IN A MINOR (Greig). *Rubenstein* (piano), *St. Louis Symphony Orchestra* (Golschmann). **NOCHES EN LOS JARDINES DE ESPANA** (Falla). *Rubenstein* (piano) *RCA*. *Victor Symphony Orchestra* (Dorati). *HMV*. *ALP* 1065.

This is a sensitive, if rather restrained performance, of the Greig work but should find favour with many. On the reverse side Falla's captures the essence of the gardens work has a vivid atmosphere and the Spanish night. On both sides the surface is quite satisfactory but the recording is a little blurred in patches and the orchestra might be more forward in the concerto.

CASSE NOISETTE SUITE (Tchaikovsky). **WATER MUSIC SUITE** (Handel) *Philharmonia Orchestra* (Karajan). *Columbia* 33 CX 1033.

Karajan's conducting of the Tchaikovsky ballet is first class. One minor criticism is the playing of the flute which in some passages could be cleaner. The *Water Music* does not come off so well. It is inclined to drag and lose its true flavour. Andree Howard set her **SUITE OF DANCES** to this music for R.A.D. Production Club's first performance on 25th July, 1953. Its delicacy and its simplicity was so well suited to the young dancers. Recording good.

SCHEHERAZADE (Rimsky Korsakov) *Philharmonia Orchestra* (Dobrowen). *Columbia* 33 SX 1007.

The changing moods, the excitement and the breath-taking death-leap of the Golden Slave in Fokine's ballet are not called to mind by this record. This is one of Rimsky Korsakov's three *tours-de-force* but Dobrowen's tempi are inclined to drag and he does not use enough light and shade in the painting of such a broad canvass to bring out the full interest. The orchestra's playing is good—so is the recording.

SWAN LAKE—BALLET SUITE and **SLEEPING BEAUTY—BALLET SUITE** (Tchaikovsky). *Philharmonia Orchestra* (Karajan) *Columbia* 33 CX 1065.

Unreservedly one can say that this is an excellent record. Both suites are of delightful selections and played with such understanding that one is entranced. No ballet-goer will want to be without this record.

LES SYLPHIDES (Chopin, orch. Britten). *Ballet Theatre Orchestra* (Levine) *Capitol* CCL 7519.

I do not find Levine's approach to this ballet at all satisfactory. His conducting is without feeling and, in a ballet where atmosphere is so essential, one soon realises after the first few bars that there is little enjoyment in store.

B.C.

MONTHLY COMPETITION: 1

The Ballet ROSMERSHOLM

● Ninette de Valois mounts a three-act ballet on Ibsen's **ROSMERSHOLM**. Write a morning-after notice of 250 words or less on her treatment, the dancing, music and decor.

The winning entry will be published in the December issue and a prize awarded. Double spaced typewriting if possible, on one side of the paper, please.

His love of sport, tennis, and riding in particular, are inherited from his Father who was a skilled amateur cricketer and a master of the hounds in Sussex. The courage and tenacity which have helped to put Dolin at the top of his particular ladders are undoubtedly a legacy from his Mother.

His violent temper is thought to be a throw-back from his Irish ancestors on both sides of his family; he learnt to control it the hard way, and recalls with some amusement his first appearance under his stage name of Anton Dolin at the Albert Hall in London, in 1923, when he badly wanted to dance "Hymn to the Sun" and "Danse Russe" which he had arranged himself. In an attempt to get his own way he flung himself on the floor, knocked himself against the wall and hit himself over the head with a tambourine. He won! The critics were overwhelming in their

dolin

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praise of his performance.

Today, his temperamental outbursts are few but when they do occur the Company panics. Said Keenan, his dresser for 25 years, "The important thing is to watch Mr. Dolin and keep him in good mood. Then everything is easy. "He is quite the most generous man I have ever met and I have never known him refuse anyone anything."

Dolin is the first to admit that he is extravagant over himself and other people. There was a time when he completely emptied his pockets to a beggar in the street and couldn't pay his fare home.

Home is anywhere in the world—

so long as there is a theatre. He has a flat in London and a house in Hollywood but these are merely resting places when he happens to be in the vicinity, which isn't very often. He'll tell you he intends to dance and to travel just as long as his two legs will carry him around.

This from a ballet dancer may sound conceited. But as Benn Toff remarked: "Dolin's interpretation of Albrecht in "Giselle" is the greatest in the world bar none. He will still be able to dance when he is 100 because he dances with his heart not his feet."

The strict early training, especially with Diaghileff in the Russian Ballet, has imbued in Dolin an almost fanatical love of discipline for discipline's sake. On the few occasions when he is not dancing during a performance he insists on his costume being laid out and his make-up put ready for him to use in case he has to deputise for a member of the company at the last moment.

Relax ?

.....

Markova told me "Everyone expects Dolin to wear himself out because he never appears to relax. When we're dancing together and travelling a lot by air I would relax quietly on the journey but Dolin would be calling for paper and pen and ink the moment we boarded the 'plane and work furiously during the whole flight."

As to the chances of Markova and Dolin coming together again, Markova says "Never." Dolin says "There is a chance; I can't say more."

Going back to pre-war days, Dolin recalls an amusing incident when they were dancing together in the provinces. Markova, billed to appear in "The Dying Swan," hurt her leg and Dolin appeared in her place, dancing his famous solo "Bolero," a dance which was inspired by the first bull fight he saw during a holiday at San Sebastian. No one was more surprised than he to read the critic's write-up the next day in the local press; "The best part of the evening arrived with Anton Dolin's spirited interpretation of "The Dying Swan."

Firmly

.....

Undoubtedly such incidents help Dolin to keep both feet firmly on the ground—when he is not dancing! He is completely unspoiled and tells with impish delight about his experience at the opening of the last New Year's Eve ball organised by Festival Ballet. Every party had a table and when he went up to the receptionist to find out the number of his table, the girl looked at him blankly. "Do you happen to have anything to do with Festival Ballet?" she enquired. Dolin found his table unaided.

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THE OLD KING'S THEATRE

was now all changed and productions of subsequent ballets were made with the greatest care and artistry.

John Ebers task in securing first class dancers from France was made a little easier by the fact that a peace had been concluded recently between England and that country. However now that a Republican government had been set up in France all the theaetres had been nationalised, all the artists being trained at public expense. As a result the French government put all obstacles possible in the path of their nationals taking engagements abroad.

However, Ebers, after much difficulty, secured four dancers of the very highest achievements, Lisa Noblet, Ferdinand Albert, Mademoiselle Montessu and Mademoiselle de Varennes.

The season opened with Deshayes' divertissement, L'OFFRANDE à TERPSICHORE which was seen some four nights later by George the Fourth attended by the Dukes of York, Clarence (later William the Fourth) and Wellington.

A transparent rainbow appeared on the stage on which was inscribed 'Vive Le Roi,' surmounted by the Goddess of Fame. Between the years 1830 and 1859 when the seasons of ballet came to an end nearly all the contemporary great ballerinas appeared at the theatre. Taglioni, Grisi the two Elslers sisters, Cerite, Grahm and Rosati. Queen Victoria took the keenest interest in ballet in her younger days and in 1837 the old King's was renamed in her honour, Her Majesty's.

ERA END

In 1843 she paid a state visit to the theatre accompanied by the

Prince Consort and was delighted with the dancing of Fanny Elsler and Cerite. Two years later she paid another visit bringing with her the Tsar of Russia and the King of Saxony. On this occasion the four probably greatest ballerinas in the world were brought together to entertain the royal visitor, Taglioni, Cerite, Grisi and Grahm.

In 1848 there was another "all star cast" in a new ballet, THE FOUR SEASONS, Cerite, Grisi, Rosati and Taglioni.

As late as 1856 Taglioni was dancing at the King's, her father being the ballet master. The ballet seasons at the King's ceased in 1859 mainly because the manager who had been responsible for them ceased to be connected with the theatre. Also since 1847 there had been an operative war between the King's and the Garden and there were signs that this might spread to include ballet. Both theatres called themselves the 'Royal Italian Opera' although before 1847 the Garden had no special association with either opera or ballet. Another factor was that in 1859 there were definite signs, both in London and in foreign capitals, that the wave of enthusiasm for ballet which had lasted over thirty years was on its wane and these signs and portents proved correct for when, in 1867, Mapleson put on in London a first class troupe in GISELE the ballet was danced to half empty houses.

The second King's Theatre, which had been the scene of the activities of so many famous dancers shared the fate of its predecessor and was burnt down in 1867.

Danish Season

from
page 4

genuine. Larsen's Coppelius—may I stress this—was no caricature but a composite and integral portrait.

The *corps* work made good theatre of the normally slopped first and third acts—I wonder at Ninette de Valois' thoughts on the reaction given the *corps*. The strength of the men, the precision and actual interest of them all and the authentic yet theatrical, use of north Hungarian folk patterns . . . this *corps* work by Harold Lander was great.

The workroom of the second act was dark, the toy figures behaved as clockwork (no yawns or itches here!) and the production of the whole work is certainly the best in contemporary ballet.

KONSERVATORIET, "The Dancing School," is a Bournonville ballet in Vestris style. A classroom ballet—but such a classroom Balanchin should see—with masters-hung gallery as class, Borge Ralov as *Maitre de Ballet* and Margrethe Schanne, Kirsten Ralov as pupils. Both are excellent. Soft, gentle. The children, as happens in several Danish works, steal thunder again. A lovely, unpretentious piece.

THE LONG FOLK

Bournonville's 'Little folk' ballet, ET FOLKESAGN, was far, far too long for its matter. Of the season, this was the real disappointment. Eric Bruhn had the major role of *Ove* without anything to dance, Kirsten Simone's *Hilda* had no real task.

Running for two hours, ET FOLKESAGN has added to its over-long, overlethargic stroll the most dreary of uninspired scores. But Bournonville's plot concinnity is telling, even here.

Ending the programme, as light relief, GRADUATION BALL in as clean-cut and sparkling a production as I have seen. Here is how to present a frolic: make it bounce along without pause. Lichin's ballet is a trifle with some unexpected cores. The comedy is good—not the usual inane comedy of ballet. The classical *pas de deux* was unfortunately partnered but again showed Margarethe Schanne's unbravurad strength.

But it was the lightness, the 'all the company' talent which romped GRADUATION BALL home as a rediscovered pleasantry.

NAPOLI

And Bournonville's light, evernew cianti of a ballet: NAPOLI.

A beautiful girl is loved by several suitors, one takes her sailing on the bay—the one she loves. A storm sweeps her away, he is rescued unconscious. But the girl awakes in the cavernous home of the Sea Sprite and his shades-of-green, seaweedy naiads. The Sprite (a most bulky, manly Sprite this) falls in love with her, transforms her—wonderful stage business here—into a naiad. In time: the lover arrives with a religious picture to spurn the Sprite and retransform the girl. Act three: rejoicings and jubilant dancing as the reunited lovers betroth.

Mona Vangsaa as Teresina, the girl, is a lovely, pure dancer and excellent actress. NAPOLI calls for a very great deal of acting. Borge Ralov, the fisherman lover, literally throws himself into his most famous role with a strength magnificent and effective.

The other soloists—Gerda Karstens, Jan Holme, Soren Weis Abildholt, Niels Bjorn Larsen and more—are cast in the most varied of roles. Yet, with no single exception, all dance and act so well as to astound the critic sore-used to taking single blessings as feast enough.

Again the *corps* work is perfection. Where are the bored faces, the dead clapping, the waxen bodies? Stage-grouped realistically, the huge cast leaps to the rhythm of the ballet with no less interest when standing at the side than when centring the stage. Here, in this Danish Ballet, is a *corps* which withers the faint praise which is all past *corps* work has culled from me.

I could watch them a season and never realise the absence of soloists. With this company the *corps* are what is an ideal: the backbone, the heart and the most alive, efficient, integral limbs of the ballet.

The hacks have said for years that English ballet needs a Diaghilev. If by that they meant an ideal was required: here it is in this great ballet of the Danes. This fortnight season was the most important one London has had in a decade.

IN the September of BALLET TODAY an article appeared under this heading. The following facts and figures may go some way towards correcting the impression given by this article.

BALLET WORKSHOP opened on 14.1.1951, and has since given over 70 performances and shown over 40 ballets by 20 different choreographers.

Of the Musical scores used, 13 have been specially written for Ballet Workshop by various young composers, 6 others have been of music given its first performance here.

The sets and costumes of more than 25 different designers have been shown. In all over 200 artists have appeared here.

The opportunities offered to these 200 artists have proved so useful that similar organisations are being set up on our lines and with our assistance in many European and American countries. As regards the usefulness of our work outside this theatre, the following facts should interest your critic:

Of the last five new productions of FESTIVAL BALLET, three have been by artists given their first opportunities here and whose work for us

A use for Ballet Workshop?

Director David Ellis replies

resulted in the recommissioned ballets (E.g. SYMPHONY FOR FUN—Charnley, ALICE IN WONDERLAND—Charnley, LAUREL CROWN—Hobson, while Tom Lingwood has designed several new productions for this company).

Of the last six productions of the BALLET RAMBERT, three were taken from the current repertoire of BALLET WORKSHOP and a fourth was by a choreographer whose first works we presented (E.g. SCHERZI DELLA SORTE—Paltenghi, MOVIMIENTOS—Charnley and Hobson, OUVERTURE renamed PAST RECALLED—Carter and McDowell, CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS—Bates).

Two of the ballets in the WALTER GORE BALLET come direct from Ballet Workshop. (TANCREDI AND CLORINDA, PEEPSHOW).

In addition to all these ballets which have now been seen by thous-

ands of people outside this theatre, we have presented special ballets for films and television and had ballets from our repertoire performed in three continents.

RECAP

★In recapping Ballet Workshop's two years, David Ellis has summarised the article he wrote for the June, 1952, issue of BALLET. That article ended: " . . . when Ballet Workshop achieves its aims and contributes something to the future of English Ballet."

The basis of the article which appeared in our September issue was the salutary one of reminding Ballet Workshop of its nominal mission and rewording the statement Ellis himself made above.

A good number of readers have commented upon the article and our reply has in each case been: Ballet Workshop, in essence, is a useful centre. That we questioned its background was simply the proof of our interest in its healthy future. David Ellis's reply to the article is welcome. His answer to the question will be equally welcome. That answer is his new season.

FUTURES — A. V. Cotton, Edith Barking and the Editor

tape record a discussion on Cinema Dance

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page 15

They don't want to invent the new form of ballet; cinema technicians will do it ultimately.

You can, I am convinced, film actual stage ballets (or bits of them) effectively, but NOT just by dancing them as done on stage. They need re-arranging, lighting differently, and above all—logical, eye-persuading camera angles—not stunts. It means fresh planning about certain aspects of lighting and camera movement method that is quite practical. . . . I see that I'm nearly on the point of giving away the simple rules that were worked out four years ago by a young choreographer and a group interested in films. Nobody will be interested until public pressure *demands* really *filmic* ballet; up to now nobody making a balletised film—and I believe I have seen every one of them—has begun to think out the essential first principles of what filmic ballet needs.

[E.B.: You have taken this down—or up—to serious ballet level again ignoring, I think, the fact that it is not cameramen or floor technicians who produce successful mass-appealing films but show-business experts who tap, years in advance, a public pulse of entertainment-want and fill it. Goldwyn, de Mille and the rest fill this category.

[P.C.-R.: Yes, but by this very proficiency at pulse-taking, such expert showmen are bounded by formulae which must never be too far removed from their last idea. So that

when RED SHOES gave us “experimental” ballet the main sequence started in the proscenium arch and finished in one. In other words the directors were binding themselves fully in advance with a completely unnecessary convention: that of the box stage.

In the same way the uses made of ballet always fit the track left by the previous success RED SHOES was obviously in the mind of Chaplin when he made his depressing, pedestrian use of dance in LIMELIGHT and influenced Sam Goldwyn in HANS ANDERSON when he made his much more colourful use of dance. What neither and no-one has tried is the—to be logical—obvious possibility of ignoring the stage tradition of ballet and merely making a filmic use of the fluid, mobile body the dancer possess. What Rene Clair did in his early work should have been the pointer here: actors were too stiff for the camera, Clair used his ballet dancers as actors instead. He wanted fluid, camera-conscious acting; not a try after ballet. But he achieved something nearer to cinematic ballet than “ballet” in the cinema has yet done.

[E.B.: But has Rene Clair achieved the success of the Hollywood film-makers?

[P.C.-R.: Certainly, whilst Clair plays to 200-seater art houses, the Hollywood film-maker has his 400-cinema circuits. But CLAIR IS STILL PLAYING AFTER TWENTY YEARS! And the Hollywood film-makers have taken more proven experience from Clair than anyone of them would admit. Yet their work—especially when fantasy is seen—bears the sign of siring by Clair, even if unconsciously.

[E.B.: This I think ends the theme for us: the cinema ballet you speak of and want is a highbrow potion which will romp through the tiny art cinemas for two or three decades and be as unknown to the general picturegoer as, say, Clair is today. My point, as was that of the film weekly, is that ballet—call it what you will—is a box-office commodity now. It is bringing ballet to a new public, providing both advance unprecedented publicity for dancers and dancing and alternative employment. What more is there?

[A.V.C.: Ballet, in the strict sense, is wrong for the cinema. We need a film dance using some elements of ballet (which is after all only one kind of dance) and some elements

from other dance styles. They can be moulded together—given the necessary new approach to such problems as lighting and camera movement—into a really cinematic form of ballet.

Ballet—all dancing for that matter—is essentially photogenic, but as with a still camera photographing a photogenic object, you have to find the right way to present your subject—lighting, exposure, angle—all these have to be thought of. A lot of ballet steps and poses look wrong when caught in a film frame (don't forget you see the ugly movements as well as the good ones).

Some experimental group will ultimately try out this new style (let's call it filmic ballet) and like sound, like colour, like 3-D, it will catch on because the big movie moguls will see that it can be a winner.

I'll finish by saying you can't make a good film version of raw, or straight, ballet because too many of the standard steps and movements don't record effectively on film; you must compose a special *new kind of ballet*—which on the stage would look very thin and restricted in pattern—and it can be done, but I'm not optimistic that it will be done for a long time yet.

[P.C.-R.: Here of course is the wind-up point to appeal to film-maker, audience and ballet-worker. The utility of cinedance, once thinking in stage-ballet terms is forgotten, will be so obvious that it will become a bandwagon for everyone to leap upon.

One example of cinedance: Ernest Borneman told me of an experiment he made in showing two fragmentary films to a Canadian audience. Film A was a ballet sequence, film B a newsreel sequence of walking townspeople trick-projected with a synchronised orchestral track. Polled after the showing, the majority of the audience (an average, large cinema audience) plumped for the newsreel scenes as the better cinedance example! Here is, I think, conclusive proof that cinema-thought dancing can be more creatively original and more average-audience-appealing than stage-ballet shot for a film.

The ogre of cinedance as it has existed so far is its conventional thinking along boxed-in stage ballet lines. To achieve cinema ballet it seems to me essential that we forget the whole environment of the theatre and concentrate on what body composition the camera can contain artistically and plot-usefully. Instead of a frippery, cinedance will be an essential, integral and unremarked part of the film medium's vocabulary.

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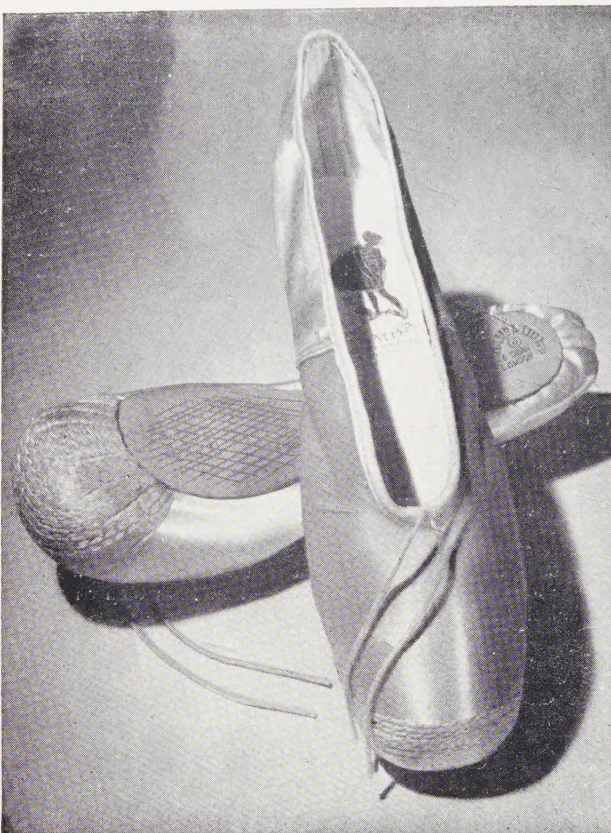
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